



National Commission on the Future of the Army

2530 Crystal Drive, Zachary Taylor Building, Suite 5000
Arlington, VA 22202

SUBJECT: National Commission on the Future of the Army (NCFA) Site Visit with Washington Army National Guard (WAARNG) and the United States Army Reserve (USAR) Minutes

Date: 24 September 2015

Locations: Camp Murray, Building 1, WA; Joint Base Lewis McCord, building 9700

Format: Briefings and round table discussions

NCFA Attendees:

HON Thomas R. Lamont, Commissioner
SMA(R) Raymond F. Chandler, Commissioner
LTG(R) Jack C. Stultz, Commissioner
MG(R) Carpenter, NCFA Executive Director
Mr. M Von Heeringen, Deputy Designated Federal Officer (DFO)
COL Rich Miller, NCFA Staff Officer
COL Kristen Dixon, NCFA Staff Officer
LTC Brian Rice, NCFA Staff Officer
LTC Mike Lockwood, Alternate DFO
Mr. Kerry Schindler, NCFA Staff Officer
Mr. Jason Southerland, NCFA Staff Officer
MAJ Cory Simpson, DFO Legal Advisor

Documents Submitted to Commission:

- Washington Army National Guard Overview and Units Briefing
- Washington National Guard Domestic Operations Briefing
- 807th Medical Command (Deployment Support) Briefing
- 396th Combat Support Hospital (CSH) Briefing

Summary:

At 0800hrs, Commissioners and NCFA staff met with WAARNG personnel at Building 1, Camp Murray, WA. The following WAARNG personnel attended:

Major General Bret D. Daugherty, The Adjutant General, Washington
BG Wally Turner, Assistant Adjutant General, Washington
COL Curt Simonson, Commander 56th Information Operations Brigade
COL Bruce Linton, Commander 66th Theater Aviation Command
COL Bryan Grenon, Commander 81st Armored Brigade Combat Team (ABCT)
COL Larry Edwards, Commander, MEDCOM
COL Daniel Dent, Commander, 96th Troop Command

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COL Shaun Hodge, J3, Washington National Guard

COL Jeffrey Sabatine, Chief Of Staff, Washington National Guard

Commissioner Lamont opened the meeting by explaining the authorities that established the Commission and made general comments about the Commission's task. The DFO, explained the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) requirements to the group.

COL Dent gave an overview of the organization and locations of the Washington National Guard. He also briefed the status of Soldiers conducting domestic and federal warfighting missions. Because of the high operations tempo with this summer's wild fires, the State is out of money for additional domestic missions. The State is concerned it will need to ask for federal dollars if another Defense Support of Civil Authorities (DSCA) mission arises. Additionally, the planned 66th Theater Aviation Command divestiture will cause a critical disruption to aviation mission command in the Northwest.

COL Dent's briefing ended at 0845 hours.

The discussion then turned to WAARNG identification as a Homeland Response Force State (1 of 10) and the lack of funding to conduct required training to meet its mission requirements. A major concern is Headquarters, Department of the Army, removed the ARNG's BCTs and Fires Brigades Task 7.4 Defense Support of Civil Authorities (DSCA) from the brigade level directed Mission Essential Task List (METL).¹ WAARNG interprets this as any training by the ARNG on task 7.4 will not be funded. The NCFA staff asked for the document stating this guidance.

When discussing Unit Status Reports (USR), WAARNG gets credit for conducting Homeland Security (HLS) cycles, though the State has funding and budget difficulties adding task 7.4 for training. NORTHCOM and ARNORTH are silent on this issue. Washington State has 3-4 presidentially-declared major disasters a year. Even though the WAARNG units were trained and ready without assigned METL task 7.4 and funding, they will not be able to train for future events. The WAARNG has been focused on the "away game" for the last ten years, and now seeks to focus on the "home game." This is important for Active Component (AC) units also as they will play a key role in large scale domestic operations and these units are not training on DSCA either.

The group then discussed deployments and overseas operations. The WAARNG Special Forces (SF) deployed its entire company for 6 months with 60-day notice. One observation is that Soldiers need to deploy overseas to provide something to work and train toward to keep the spirit of adventure and sense of purpose alive and retain Soldiers. Washington continues their State Partnership Program (SPP) with Vietnam and Thailand and said everything is coordinated through I Corps and PACOM. The 56th Theater Information Operations Group (TIOG) is aligned to PACOM and provides exercise support to USARPAC and I Corps through Pacific Pathways and other named exercises.

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The 66th Theater Aviation Command (TAC) briefed the ARNG's aviation response to the Pakistan earthquake while deployed to Afghanistan. They also explained that only two of 10 brigade level aviation headquarters are stationed west of the Mississippi River. The 66th TAC provides mission command to NORTHCOM in the event of a Cascadia Subduction Zone disaster event. However, the 66th TAC was identified as a reduction under the Aviation Restructure Initiative (ARI) and the State believes there is still a strategic mission for this unit.

The discussion moved to force reductions, which impact 307 Soldiers from WAARNG. The WAARNG could man the units slated for reduction if they were allowed to keep them, as they are important to the State and the communities. When the Commission asked how the WAARNG selected the units to reduce, they replied that they looked at State redundancies, which units fit the NGB and HQDA lists, and made sure the State still had what was needed for State missions.

While discussing the 81st ABCT involvement in WA wildfire response (~1300 Soldiers), the discussion shifted to the potential cross assignment of AC and ARNG Soldiers. Future opportunities are possible when the 81st ABCT becomes a Stryker BCT (SBCT). The NCFA staff asked for WAARNG's milestone charts/plans for the ABCT to SBCT conversion.

In discussing mobilizations, the WAARNG noted "we are not in place to do a job like the 82nd [Airborne] but we are good at what we do." Progressive validation for deployment (ramping up over the 3-5 year train up) is a good model to prepare for deployment. Commissioners asked "what if you are responsible for your own mobilization?" WAARNG commander noted there is value in an external evaluation and confirmation, though 1st Army training had aircraft pilots kicking in doors.ⁱⁱ Mobilization and post mobilization activities are brittle and too strict, though commanders also noted recent Fort Hood mobilization experiences have been great. The challenge is to get Soldiers in the right mindset first.

The funding discussion opened with the statement that 12304(b) funding was not understood and therefore not budgeted. The 81st ABCT had a 3-year dwell between two deployments. The last NTC rotation for the 81st ABCT was in 2004 (11 years ago). They need more than 39 days of training per year as an ABCT. The 39-day model is not sufficient for an ABCT; training days should be based on unit type/echelon. Additionally, Soldiers in Title 32 status cannot participate in international training; they have to be in Title 10 status.

When discussing manning, the group's perspective was using AC Soldiers instead of full time support (FTS) would be bad. FTS Soldiers are unique and units would suffer from the lack of continuity. Full-time manning authorizations are insufficient; as there are no Department of the Army Civilians (DACs) to run installations.

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The Commissioners asked if the WAARNG tracks civilian employment expertise of their Soldiers, and if they use local technical expertise for Cyber, as an example. Commanders noted they know and track civilian expertise at the unit level. Civilian skills are hard to translate and, if needed, are put together as an ad hoc organization to meet a special task. They need to establish criteria then work certification and credentials.

The group discussion ended at this point, Commissioners thanked everyone for their time and service and the meeting closed at 0945 hours.

Following a short break and change in some participants, the next series of discussions began at 0950 hours. The following WAARNG personnel participated:

MG Bret Daugherty, The Adjutant General, Washington National Guard
BG Michael Stencel, Chief of Staff, Oregon National Guard
BG Todd Plimpton, Land Component Commander, Oregon National Guard
COL Shaun Hodge, J3, Washington National Guard
COL Jeffrey Sabatine, Chief Of Staff, Washington Army National Guard
CSM David Nunn, J37 Plans and Operations Specialist/66th TAC CSM
CSM Shane Lake, Oregon National Guard, Senior Enlisted Advisor
LTC Brian Dean, Oregon National Guard, Unit Commander
SGM Brian Rikstad, J35, Plans and Operations Specialist/81st BCT SGM
Mr. John Bower, Joint Operations Watch Duty Specialist, NGB Contractor
SPC Richard Shaffer, Joint Operations Watch Duty Specialist
PFC Alyssa Holden, State Active Duty finance personnel
SPC Sera McArthur, State Active Duty finance personnel

Commissioner Lamont opened the discussion by explaining the authorities that established the commission and made general comments about the commission's task. Mr. Von Heeringen, the DFO, explained the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) requirements to the group.

COL Shaun Hodge and COL Jeffrey Sabatine gave an operational overview of the WAARNG. Commissioners were briefed that State and regional planning provides an understanding and increases interoperability with other State and federal agencies. Training for domestic missions enhances overall readiness of units. Additionally, community and regional basing increases accessibility to State emergencies with reduced response times.

The briefing ended at 1030 hours and a separate meeting with WA and OR TAGs took place. Attending with the Commissioners and NCFA staff:

MG Bret Daugherty, The Adjutant General, Washington National Guard
Brig Gen Michael Stencel, Acting Adjutant General for Oregon
BG Todd Plimpton, Land Component Commander, Oregon National Guard
COL Larry Edwards, Commander, MEDCOM, WA
CSM Shane Lake, CSM, Oregon National Guard

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Commissioner Lamont explained made general comments about the commission's task. Mr. Von Heeringen, the DFO, explained the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) requirements to the group.

The TAGs opened up the discussion with comments concerning the Regional Training Institutes (RTI). They noted there is training parity across all Army components, which shorten readiness timelines. As for funding, the ARNG is not fully funded for Noncommissioned Officer Education System (NCOES) or Duty Military Occupational Specialty Qualification (DMOSQ) schools. ARNG needs to make better use of duty time and better schools management. The way ARNG manages schools segregates themselves from the rest of the Army.

ARNG can usually only go to training during certain times of year. Additionally, 39 days is not the right structure for training days, though, the TAGs would not want to trade force structure for funding additional training days. Such a solution is viewed as a short-term fix causing long-term problems.

The ARNG needs funding consistency and the entire allocation of Army structure (all components) needs to take better advantage of geographic factors. For example, JBLM is the model for Pacific Northwest partnership, with unique structure and geography. There is a miss-match across all three components over the years and we need a total force look to find some logical relationships to optimize cost to benefits.

Next Brig Gen Stencel explained this year as Oregon's worst-ever fire season and likely an indication of a new normal. Oregon and Washington link with the Emergency Management Assistant Compact (EMAC), but Washington is also having significant fire issues and strains the ability for one state supporting the other.

As for operational deployments, Oregon was the last State to deploy a Brigade Combat Team (BCT) to Afghanistan. TAGs noted that BCTs are well suited for Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Enhanced Conventional Weapons (CBRNE) Enterprise missions. Also, the 116th ABCT ORARNG just completed a National Training Center (NTC) rotation.

They called for adequate funding for State Partnership Program (SPP). Additionally, the ARNG should resource nationwide maintenance of equipment to improve readiness. Oregon NG maintenance units are out across the Department of Defense fixing equipment as part of improving readiness rates.

When discussing AC/RC integration, the TAGs noted I Corps, PACOM and NORTHCOM have all been genuine. Unfortunately, the Army sometimes makes policy decisions affecting all components without input from the Reserve Components. For

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example, eliminating first-term enlistment bonuses probably makes sense for the AC, but not for the Army National Guard.

The group discussion ended at 1115 hours and NCFA personnel travelled by ground transportation to the Courage Dining Facility (Bldg. 9129) on JBLM.

The following USAR leaders joined NCFA personnel from 1130 hours to 1215 hours for no-host lunch and round table discussion:

BG James Mason, Deputy Commanding General (South) 807th Medical Command

BG Darrell Guthrie, Commanding General, 104th Training Division

BG Kurt Hardin, Deputy Commanding General, Sustainment Command

COL Katherine Simonson, Commander, 396th Combat Support Hospital

COL George Dukes, USAR Staff

COL Eric Folkstead, USAR Staff

The Commissioners and attendees had a general discussion about how the Commission was going, and the visits made to date. This was also a chance to have a general discussion with Soldiers. After lunch, the NCFA personnel travelled by ground transportation to the Coby G. Schwab Reserve Center, 9700 Tank Trail Road, JBLM.

The following personnel from the 807th Medical Command (Deployment Support) and 396th Combat Support Hospital, USAR, joined NCFA personnel for briefing and round table discussion that started at 1230 hours:

BG James Mason, Deputy Commanding General (South) 807th Medical Command

BG Darrell Guthrie, Commanding general, 104th Training Division

BG Kurt Hardin, Deputy Commanding General, Sustainment Command

COL Katherine Simonson, Commander, 396th Combat Support Hospital

COL George Dukes, USAR NFCA Staff

COL Eric Folkestad, USAR NCFA Staff

COL Charles Cumiskey, Executive Officer, 396th Combat Support Hospital

COL Bryan Philips, 2nd Medical Brigade

LTC Donald Johnson, BDE S3, 2nd Medical Brigade

LTC Cora Courage, Commander, 1972 COSC

MAJ Douglas Ryle, Deputy G5 807th Medical Command Deployment Support

MSG Joshua Davis, 807th Medical Command Deployment Support

SFC Eric Kolar, 1972 COSC, 396th Combat Support Hospital

SPC Heather Rusaw, 1972 COSC, 396th Combat Support Hospital

1LT Christine Kim, 145th Multi-functional Medical Battalion Administrative Assistant

CSM Rodney Wionowsky, 2nd Medical Brigade

SGT Jesus Morales, 145th Multi-functional Medical Battalion

SGT Russel Philips IV, 1972 COSC 396th Combat Support Hospital

SPC Marcus Waters, 145th Multi-functional Medical Battalion

SPC Brittany Trevarthen, 1972 COSC 396th Combat Support Hospital

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Commissioner Lamont opened the meeting by explaining the authorities that established the commission and made general comments about the commission's tasks. The DFO explained the FACA requirements to the group.

BG Mason, 807th Medical Command, explained the organization of the unit. The command currently has over 10,600 Soldiers assigned in 98 units across 26 States. The command's units are deployed in multiple Combatant Command locations participating in operations and exercises.

BG Mason noted a partnership with industry, General Electric, to train Soldiers as Biomedical Equipment Specialists. The program is a huge success where Soldiers that complete the program are hired by General Electric and a majority of the Soldiers stay in the unit.

COL Simonson, 396th Combat Support Hospital, explained the unit's mission, organization, and capabilities. The two major units are the early entry hospital element and the hospital company. There are no major issues with those units, but there are challenges recruiting talent for head and neck surgical requirements.

After both presentations, BG Mason asked everyone in the room to introduce themselves. A question and answer session followed introductions.

Soldiers talked about a huge gap in having qualified personnel from the medical community serving in units. Units are critically short midgrade medical personnel. Possible solutions to bring them into the USAR are using very short deployments, targeted bonuses, and reducing the waiver process. Many health care providers serving in USAR take a pay loss to deploy.

Army Medical recruiters are no longer assigned in the training hospitals. Therefore, there should be a greater push to get recruiters into medical training programs and professional conferences. Additionally, recruiters should stop setting artificially low recruiting goals and focus on filling key skilled personnel shortages.

Also, recruiting should look at re-employing former medical professionals that left the Army due to personal reasons, but want to reenter the Service. Having former Soldiers go back through a lengthy reentry process makes no sense. Further, age restrictions for doctors should be relooked as the waiver process for age currently takes an average of two years. The Army loses many talented people by making them wait too long.

The Soldiers noted the USAR should eliminate the dual status program for the medical community. Soldiers stated they lose talented people because some in the medical community may not meet Army physical standards, but the Army needs their skill set. In their opinion, the Army should not demand that a medical professional pass an APFT or wear a uniform. Also, medical professionals who have civilian certifications should be eligible for a reclassification process that aligns with the civilian certification.

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Training and battle assemblies for medical personnel should be more flexible. In regard to training, Army Regulation 350-1 requirements do not allow the time to do METL / Individual training. Reductions in Full Time Support (FTS) are hurting readiness, and further reductions will make achieving training and readiness difficult to impossible.

The conversation continued with emphasis on doing a lean six sigma project on Lead Materiel Integration (LMI) to find some efficiency. Possibly embrace technology, for example, by developing a web application for job books. Positive practices include using Equipment Consolidation Site 10 (ECS-10), a location to check out equipment when personnel need the equipment to train or deploy, which could help optimize the 90-day deployment cycle for doctors.

The session ended at 14115 hours with the Commissioners thanking everyone for their time and service. NCFA personnel returned by ground transportation to the Red Lion Hotel, Tacoma, Washington, to prepare for an open meeting later that day.

ⁱ ADP 3-0, Unified Land Operations, October 2011: "The central idea of Unified Land Operations is that Army units seize, retain, and exploit the initiative to gain and maintain a position of relative advantage in sustained land operations to create conditions for favorable conflict resolution. This central idea applies to all military operations—offensive, defensive, and stability or defense support of civil authorities." The tasks for defense support of civil authorities within the standardized brigade mission essential task list are found under stability operations.

ⁱⁱ Central Command's Combatant Command directed tasks for all Soldiers included clearing a room.